



## World Premiere of *La Monarca* by TYS Cellist, Aiden Ramirez

This Saturday, the Tacoma Youth Symphony will present the world premiere of a work by current TYS student, Aiden Ramirez. Aiden is a senior this year at Kentwood High School and he has been in TYSA for four years. We asked Aiden how he first became interested in composing and what inspires his work:

“I first became interested in composition in elementary school when I downloaded a music notation app and started writing down little musical ideas that would pop into my head throughout the day. At first it was just curiosity, but I quickly realized that writing music felt different from anything else I had done. Those small sketches became a way to hold onto emotions, memories, and moments that I did not always know how to express in words. Over time, I became deeply fascinated with how music could create atmosphere and shape emotion, and how sound could carry something personal yet still connect with other people.

I’m especially inspired by the natural world, including landscapes, ecosystems, and the way sound exists within an environment. I often think about how wind moves through trees or how light shifts across water, and I try to reflect that sense of motion and transformation in my music. Many of my pieces draw from nature, cultural heritage, and personal identity, which are all important themes in the work being premiered.”

Aiden’s works have been performed by ensembles such as the Ravenna String Orchestra, Issaquah Philharmonic Orchestra, musicians of the Seattle Symphony, and now the Tacoma Youth Symphony. In the summer of 2025, he attended the Boston University Tanglewood Institute’s Electroacoustic Composition Workshop, where he composed an original surround-sound work. He has also been selected for three consecutive years to participate in the Seattle Symphony’s Merriman-Ross Family Young Composers Workshop. For the past four years, Aiden has studied composition with Dr. Sarah Bassingthwaighe, Head of Composition at Seattle Pacific University. Aiden has been accepted to several out-of-state schools to study composition next year, and he is still in the process of making his final decision.

*La Monarca* follows the remarkable migration of the monarch butterfly from Mexico, north into the United States, and then back to Mexico. The migration spans four generations, with the first three generations living only a few weeks, and the final generation completing the journey back to Mexico over a nine-month period. The butterflies return to Mexico around the time of the *El Día de los Muertos* celebration and hold significant cultural importance in Mexico, symbolizing the souls of departed loved ones embarking on a challenging voyage to reunite with their kin. That cycle of continuation and resilience is an important symbolic foundation for the structure of the work.

According to Aiden, this piece also has its own journey. “It was originally written as a work for bassoon and electronics during the 2024 Merriman-Ross Family Young Composers Workshop with the Seattle Symphony under the mentorship of Marcin Pączkowski. Over time, it expanded into this symphonic version. In many ways, that growth mirrors the monarch’s life cycle itself, evolving from a more intimate form into something broader and more expansive. I am incredibly grateful and humbled that Dr. Welsch has given me the opportunity to continue developing this piece and to bring it to life with the Tacoma Youth Symphony. The journey from its original chamber version to this premiere has been both exciting and meaningful, and it represents a level of trust and support that I deeply appreciate. This premiere represents not only a personal milestone, but also a meaningful collaboration with Tacoma Youth Symphony. Being a part of TYS has played a major role in my musical development as both a cellist and a composer, and it makes this premiere especially significant to me.”

Be sure to join the Tacoma Youth Symphony this Saturday for the world premiere of *La Monarca*! Get your tickets now at [www.tysamusic.org](http://www.tysamusic.org)

World premiere of  
*La Monarca*  
by TYS Student  
Aiden Ramirez  
March 7, 2026  
7:00 PM  
Rialto Theater





**“Going Home”**  
**Saturday, March 7, 2026**  
**7:00 P.M. Rialto Theater**

**Congratulations to TASO Conductor, Karen Helseth,  
 2026 WMEA Hall of Fame Inductee!**

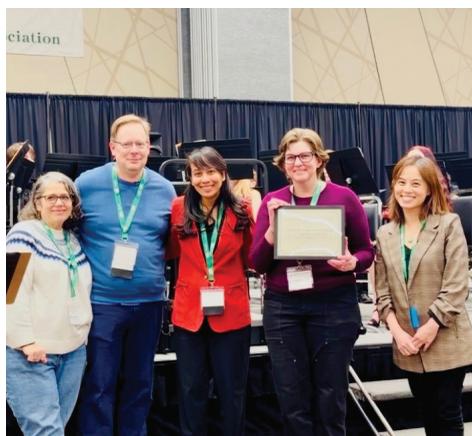


The Washington Music Educators Hall of Fame was established by the WMEA Board of Directors to give recognition for exceptional support, inspiration and outstanding contribution to the growth and development of music education, both public and private, in the state of Washington.

In addition to her work with TYSA, Ms. Helseth is currently the orchestra director at Einstein Middle School and Shorewood High School in the Shoreline School District, a position she has held since 2018. Prior to that, Ms. Helseth taught orchestra and other music classes in the Edmonds School District for seventeen years, and in the Federal Way School District for four years. Ms. Helseth has also worked with the Cascade Youth Symphony Orchestra as conductor of Sinfonette Orchestra, and cello coach for Junior and Youth Symphony Orchestras.

Ms. Helseth is the sixth TYSA conductor to be inducted into WMEA’s Hall of Fame. She joins the ranks of Dr. Stanley Chapple, C. Irvin Wright, Dale Johnson, Karla Timmerman-Epperson, and Dr. Paul-Elliott Cobbs.

**TYSA Honored as 2026 Mountain Region  
 Friend of Music**



TYSA was honored as the “2026 Mountain Region Friend of Music” by WMEA and the Mountain Music Educators Association at the WMEA Conference in Yakima last month. This award recognizes exceptional dedication, support, and advocacy for music education in the Mountain Region.

We are deeply grateful for our partners in music education and for the wonderful students who inspire this work every day.



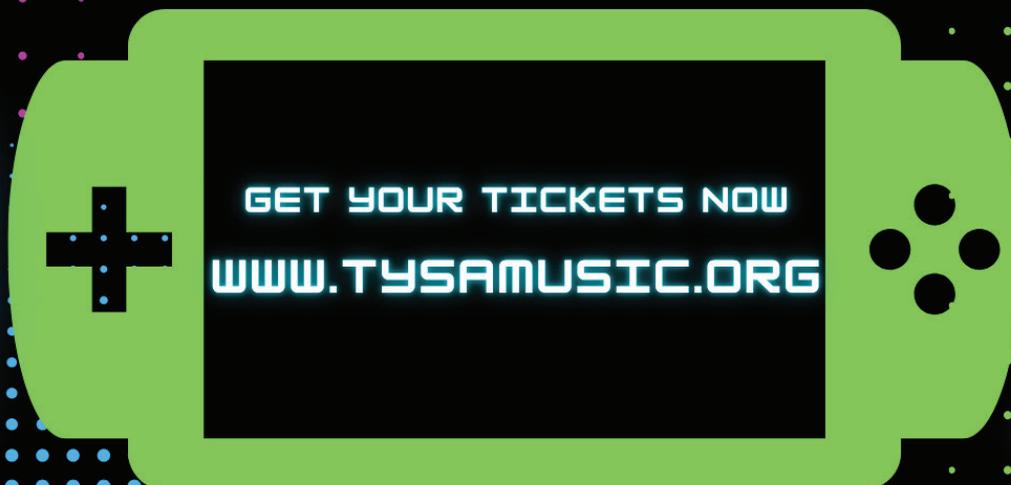
**TY**  
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# GAMERS RHAPSODY

SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2026  
7:00 PM PANTAGES THEATER

FEATURING ALL OF THE ORCHESTRAS OF THE  
TACOMA YOUTH SYMPHONY ASSOCIATION



GET YOUR TICKETS NOW  
[WWW.TYSAMUSIC.ORG](http://WWW.TYSAMUSIC.ORG)





## CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025-2026 STUDENT SOLOISTS!



Isaiah Girges, Oboe  
TSP  
December 13, 2025



Koyee Ly, Violin  
TASO  
December 13, 2025



Logan Johnson, Trumpet  
TYS  
March 7, 2026



Emily Schultz, Violin  
TSS  
May 2, 2026



Arabella Schultz, Violin  
TSP  
May 2, 2026



Ella Kim, Violin  
TASO  
May 9, 2026



Lucas Dyvig, Trombone  
TJYS  
May 9, 2026



Nichoas Brazier, Violin  
TYS  
May 16, 2026

# Summer Music Camps 2026



Puget Sound Percussion Festival  
June 30 - July 2, 2026  
Tacoma City Theaters



Bassoon Fest NW  
July 7-9, 2026  
Tacoma City Theaters



Evergreen Music Festival  
Session 1 July 13-17, 2026  
Pacific Lutheran University



Evergreen Music Festival  
Session 2 July 19-25, 2026  
Central Washington University



Bass Festival  
July 28-31, 2026  
University of Puget Sound

**Register  
Today:  
[tysamusic.org](https://tysamusic.org)**



Summer Jazz Orchestra  
August 6-9, 2026  
Tacoma City Theaters

# Winter 2026 at TYSA

TYSA's 2026 is off to a great start! On January 24, students from all of TYSA's orchestras participated in the annual free community Chamber Music Concert at Annie Wright Schools. Musicians from Symphony Tacoma presented masterclasses for all of our Tacoma Youth Symphony and Tacoma Junior Youth Symphony students on January 31. On February 6, the Youth Symphony presented two Discover Music concerts for more than one thousand enthusiastic fourth-graders from around the greater Puget Sound area.

We are continuing our commitment to bringing music to all areas of our community! Education Manager Tommy Hawthorne regularly visits Mary Bridge Children's Hospital, Frank Tobey Jones Retirement Community, Eliseo, Willie Stewart Academy, and Remann Hall Juvenile Detention Center to teach ukuleles, drums, and song writing, as well as going to other locations across Tacoma. Dr. James Doyle teaches TYSamba at Stanley Elementary two days each week. We are also working with Tacoma Public Libraries to present "Musical Storytimes" and are looking forward to returning to Tacoma Parks this summer with musical offerings.

The month of March will offer the Tacoma Youth Symphony concert on March 7, the Tacoma String Philharmonic will be performing at Northwest Sinfonietta's Family Concert on March 14, and TYSA ProLab students will be performing with Northwest Sinfonietta on March 14 and 15. The annual Trivia Night fundraiser will be on March 21, and our new "Gamers Rhapsody" concert will be on March 28. On March 19 and 20, school orchestras from around the area will be participating in TYSA's Symphonic Orchestra Festival at the University of Puget Sound. Each school ensemble will have the opportunity to perform for their peers, work with a TYSA clinician, and participate in a large symphonic experience with other school orchestras - along with woodwind, brass, and percussion students from TYSA.



## Five Questions with TYSA Alumni

We have a new feature on the TYSA website and on our Facebook and Instagram pages called "Five Questions with TYSA Alumni." The first alumni we featured was violinist Grace Youn and more will be coming soon. Check out Grace's interview at [tysamusic.org/alumni/](https://tysamusic.org/alumni/)

Are you a TYSA alumni? We would love to hear *your* TYSA story. Contact Dr. James Doyle at [jdoyle@tysamusic.org](mailto:jdoyle@tysamusic.org) to answer TYSA's Five Questions today.

# Buy Your Trivia Night Tickets Now!

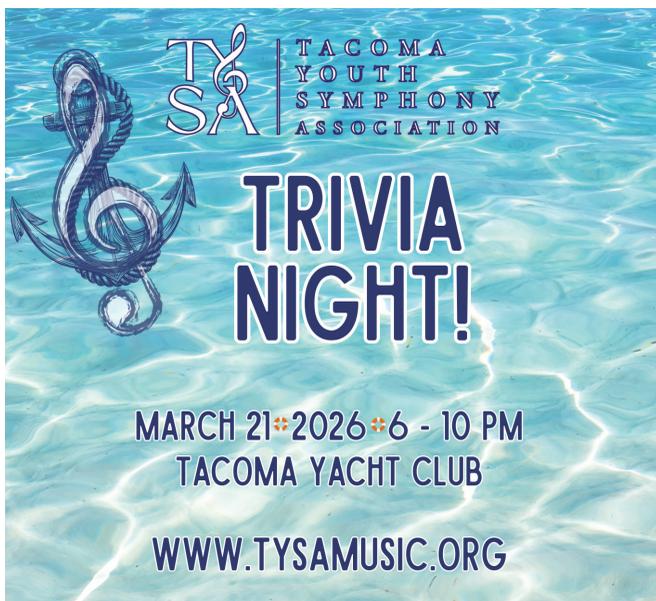
Set sail with us on Saturday, March 21, 2026, for our annual Trivia Night Fundraiser & Auction! Drop anchor for three tide-turning rounds of trivia, a boatload of fun games, treasure-filled silent and live auctions, stellar student performances, and a feast of delectable Italian cuisine and drinks that are sure to shiver your timbers. All hands on deck—every doubloon raised supports the TYSA Scholarship Fund, helping us chart a course toward greater access to music education and expanding our programs for young musicians.



Our Trivia Night Fundraiser will take place at the beautiful Tacoma Yacht Club. Located on the Dune Peninsula at the entrance to Commencement Bay, this venue offers stunning views of the Puget Sound and Mt. Rainier! The Yacht Club takes great pride in providing the finest cuisine and service. Enjoy some wonderful Italian cuisine, plus wine, beer, cocktails, and more - all while supporting the students of the Tacoma Youth Symphony Association!



The TYSA Trivia Night Fundraiser will feature both live auction and silent auctions. Some of the tantalizing items will include: Four Summit Club tickets for a Tacoma Rainiers game; the opportunity to play Super Mario Brothers against TYSA Education Manager Tommy Hawthorne - live during the Gamers Rhapsody Concert; a 7 night stay at the Four Seasons Residence Club in Scottsdale, Arizona; tickets to Symphony Tacoma and Auburn Symphony; a professional bow repair; a dumpling making experience; works by well known local artists; the opportunity to guest conduct the Tacoma Youth Symphony next season; or win to get the best seats in the house for the Costume Concert in October. There will also be a “dessert dash” featuring exquisite confections from some of the area’s most celebrated bakeries!



**Don't miss the boat—  
secure your berth now at  
[www.tysamusic.org](http://www.tysamusic.org)**

# Join Us for These Upcoming Concerts

**March 7, 2026, 7:00 PM**

Tacoma Youth Symphony

*Going Home*

*Rialto Theater*

Sponsored by the Houglum Family Fund

**March 28, 2026, 7:00 PM**

*Gamers Rhapsody*

Featuring all of TYSA's Orchestras

*Pantages Theater*

**May 2, 2026, 4:00 PM**

*Season's Crescendo*

Prelude Strings

Tacoma String Symphony

Tacoma String Philharmonic

Tacoma Wind Philharmonic

*Rialto Theater*

**May 9, 2026, 4:00 PM**

*Finale in Full Color*

Tacoma Academy String Orchestra

Tacoma Junior Youth Symphony

Tacoma Youth Brass Ensemble

*Rialto Theater*

**May 16, 2026, 7:00 PM**

Tacoma Youth Symphony

*The Year 1905: Love and Revolution*

*Rialto Theater*

For more information or to purchase tickets go to

[www.tysamusic.org](http://www.tysamusic.org)

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